

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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TO SECSTATE WASH DC 2797

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, OECD

SUBJECT: STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ON OECD PROJECT
ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED
INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES IN HARMONY WITH THAT OF
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (INTERFUTURES)

REF: STATE 135642

1. SUMMARY: STEERING COMMITTEE OF JAPANESE PROPOSED
PROJECT ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVANCED INDUSTRI-
AL SOCIETIES IN HARMONY WITH THAT OF DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES (NOW DUBBED "INTERFUTURES" PROJECT) HELD
USEFUL FIRST MEETING JUNE 3-4. MEETING REVEALED
CONTINUED CONCERN AMONG DELEGATES OVER BROAD RANGE OF
PROJECT BUT LACK OF CONSENSUS OVER HOW TO NARROW ITS
FOCUS, SOME (US AND FRANCE IN PARTICULAR) ARGUING THAT
PROJECT SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON SPECIFIC ISSUES AND OTHERS
(JAPAN, CANADA, NORDICS) ARGUING THAT UNIQUE VALUE OF
PROJECT WILL BE ITS ABILITY TO ILLUMINATE INTERRELATION-
SHIPS AMONG WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL
FACTORS. RESULT WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH PROGRAM
PROPOSED BY RESEARCH TEAM (WHICH TEAM DEFENDED AS
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DESIGNED TO ENCOMPASS THESE TWO APPROACHES FROM THE

OUTSET) COUPLED WITH WARNINGS THAT RANGE OF ISSUES TO BE COVERED SHOULD BE REDUCED, IN PARTICULAR BY AVOIDING TO EXTENT POSSIBLE AREAS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN WELL COVERED ELSEWHERE. ACCORDING TO RESEARCH TEAM ADVISORY PANEL, MEETING THE TWO PREVIOUS DAYS, REACHED SIMILAR CONCLUSION. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 29-30. END SUMMARY.

2. ORGANIZATION. SAHURO OKITA OF JAPAN ELECTED CHAIRMAN AND CLAUDE ROSS (UK CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF) AND PER SCHREINER (DIRECTOR-GENERAL, PLANNING DEPARTMENT OF NORWEGIAN FINANCE MINISTRY) WERE CHOSEN AS VICE CHAIRMEN. OTHER DELEGATES WERE GENERALLY SENIOR OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR PLANNING IN FINANCE AND ECONOMICS MINISTRIES. US REP WAS BURTON MALKIEL OF CEA.

3. GENERAL APPROACH. PROJECT DIRECTOR LESOURNE LED OFF WITH EXPLANATION OF BASIC PROJECT PROPOSAL (FUT(76) 1) AND REACTIONS THERETO BY ADVISORY PANEL WHICH HAD MET THE PREVIOUS TWO DAYS. ACCORDING TO LESOURNE PANEL'S REACTION TO PROJECT PROPOSAL WAS GENERALLY POSITIVE, ALTHOUGH CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED OVER BROAD RANGE OF SPECIFIC TOPICS. PANEL CONCLUDED, INTER ALIA, THAT EAST-WEST ISSUES SHOULD BE COVERED ONLY TO EXTENT RELEVANT TO BASIC CONCERNS OF PROJECT. EMPHATIC VIEW WAS THAT CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WORLD MODEL SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

4. IN DESCRIBING BASIC PLANS FOR PROJECT DURING FIRST YEAR, RESEARCH TEAM (BRANSON) EMPHASIZED THAT PHASE A (CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERAL FRAMEWORK) WAS INTENDED AS "GUIDE" TO INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG TOPICS WHICH MIGHT BE MISSED IF PROJECT CONCENTRATED SOLELY ON SPECIFICS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT WORK ON PHASE B (CONSIDERATION OF SPECIFIC TOPICS) WOULD BEGIN SIMULTANEOUSLY AND THAT IT WAS NOT INTENDED THAT EQUAL EMPHASIS WOULD BE PLACED ON ALL LISTED TOPICS. CLEARLY, RESEARCH TEAM WOULD AVOID EXTENSIVE NEW WORK ON AREAS ALREADY WELL COVERED IN OECD OR ELSEWHERE. MAIN CRITERIA FOR IMMEDIATE WORK ON SPECIFIC TOPICS WOULD BE (1) CLEAR RELEVANCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO CENTRAL THRUST OF PROJECT, 2) DEGREE OF CONCERN TO GOVERNMENTS, AND 3) WHETHER WORK ON A SPECIFIC TOPIC WOULD LEAD TO MEANINGFUL RESULTS INDEPENDENTLY.

5. LEADING OFF DISCUSSION US REP (MALKIEL) AGREED THAT PHASE A WAS BOTH NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE TO INSURE THAT IMPORTANT ISSUES AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS ARE NOT MISSED BUT URGED THAT WORK BEGIN IMMEDIATELY ON SELECTED

SPECIFIC TOPICS. HE VIEWED AS MAIN PURPOSE OF PROJECT TO DEFINE OPTIONS FOR GOVERNMENTS ON IMPORTANT LONG-TERM ISSUES AND TO ASSIST THEM IN DEALING WITH THEM. POLICY ORIENTATION SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED IN ALL PHASES. MOST OTHER DELS AGREED ON THE NEED TO GO INTO SPECIFIC POLICY ISSUES BUT MANY --

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UK, DENMARK, NORWAY, JAPAN AND CANADA IN PARTICULAR -- FELT THAT UNIQUE VALUE OF PROJECT WOULD BE IN SHEDDING LIGHT ON INTERRELATIONSHIPS ON WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES AND THAT MAIN EMPHASIS SHOULD THEREFORE BE ON PHASE A. SEVERAL DELS ADVOCATED -- AND RESEARCH TEAM AGREED -- THAT TIME FRAME SHOULD VARY ACCORDING TO TOPIC, WITH YEAR 2000 BEING THE OUTSIDE DATE.

6. SPECIFIC TOPICS. US REP SUGGESTED FOUR SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR STUDY WHICH COULD BE CHARACTERIZED AS BOTH FEASIBLE AND POTENTIALLY OF SIGNIFICANT HELP TO GOVERNMENT POLICY MAKERS:

-- LONG-RUN ADJUSTMENT TO OIL PROBLEM. SHARP
CHANGE IN RELATIVE PRICES MAY HAVE MADE LARGE
PART OF INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE OBSOLETE AND
CREATED NEED FOR GREATER CAPITAL INVESTMENT. IF
GNP RATIO REMAINS THE SAME, THIS MAY LEAD TO
SLOWER GROWTH RATES, EFFECTS OF WHICH WOULD BE
WORTH EXAMINING BOTH IN TERMS OF RELATIONS AMONG
OECD COUNTRIES AND IN TERMS OF THEIR RELATIONS
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WITH LDCS.

-- EXAMINATION OF MEANS BY WHICH GREATER
FLOW OF INVESTMENT TO LDCS MIGHT BE STIMULATED.

-- ROLE OF BUFFER STOCKS IN DEALING WITH
COMMODITY PROBLEMS AND EXAMINATION OF HOW THEY
MIGHT BE STRUCTURED TO BENEFIT BOTH DCS AND LDCS.

-- IMPLICATIONS FOR LDCS OF GREATER SYNCHRONI-
ZATION OF BUSINESS CYCLE.

7. MOST DELS WELCOMED THESE SUGGESTIONS AND RESEARCH
TEAM POINTED TO THEM AS EXCELLENT EXAMPLES OF TOPICS
AROUND WHICH TO STRUCTURE AD HOC MEETINGS OF SENIOR
OFFICIALS. SEVERAL DELS ADVOCATED GREATER EMPHASIS ON
TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT AND ON GENERAL TOPIC OF INTER-
NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRY. MOST DELS ADVOCATED
NARROWING OF FOCUS BUT LITTLE CONSENSUS
DEVELOPED ON HOW THIS MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED. FOLLOWING
INTERVENTIONS BY SEVERAL DELS, HOWEVER, SECRETARIAT
INDICATED THERE WOULD BE NO RESEARCH ON POPULATION AND
THAT WORK ON ENERGY WOULD BE LIMITED TO SPECIFIC AREAS
NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE.

8. AD HOC MEETINGS OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. US
REP AND OTHER DELS EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF THESE
MEETINGS AND THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH LESOURNE'S
PROPOSAL THAT FIRST SUCH MEETING SHOULD BE HELD NEXT
SPRING, BUILT AROUND A SPECIFIC ISSUE ON WHICH MEANING-
FUL ANALYSIS HAD BEEN PRODUCED BY RESEARCH TEAM. IT
WAS AGREED THAT STEERING COMMITTEE WOULD LOOK AT SPECIFIC
PROPOSALS IN THIS REGARD AT NEXT MEETING.

9. BUDGETARY AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS. THERE WAS
GENERAL AGREEMENT, SUBJECT TO EXAMINATION BY BUDGET
COMMITTEE, TO REVISION OF PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET
CONTAINED IN FUT(76)1. LESOURNE INDICATED THAT BASED
ON COMMITMENTS BY PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS TO DATE,
PROJECT WAS ASSURED OF \$3.7 MILLION OVER THE THREE YEAR

PERIOD; SECRETARIAT WAS ALMOST CERTAIN OF AN ADDITIONAL
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\$200,00. IN LIGHT OF SCARCITY OF FUNDS, LESOURNE

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INDICATED THAT HE HAD DROPPED AS TOO COSTLY IDEA OF
CONTRACTING OUT SOME WORK TO RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS,
ALTHOUGH HE EXPECTED INFORMALLY TO GET VALUABLE INPUT
AND COLLABORATION FROM SEVERAL. HE WAS HOPEFUL OF
GETTING FOUNDATION FUNDS FOR SOME SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF
PROGRAM, SUCH AS CONSULTANCIES OF EXPERTS FROM LDCS,
AND WOULD BEGIN CONTACTING APPROPRIATE INSTITUTIONS
THIS SUMMER. THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS TO THIS PROCE-
DURE, PROVIDED NO UNACCEPTABLE STRINGS WERE ATTACHED
AND BASIC ORIENTATION OF PROJECT WAS NOT ALTERED.

10. CONCLUSION: BASIC CONCLUSION OF RATHER RAMBLING
TWO-DAY MEETING WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH RESEARCH
TEAM'S PROPOSED APPROACH, COUPLED WITH WARNINGS THAT
RANGE OF ISSUES TO BE COVERED SHOULD BE REDUCED, IN
PARTICULAR BY AVOIDING TO EXTENT POSSIBLE AREAS WHICH
HAVE ALREADY BEEN WELL COVERED ELSEWHERE. NEXT STEERING
COMMITTEEMEETING WAS SET FOR NOVEMBER 29-30, AT
WHICH TIME RESEARCH TEAM WILL MAKE PROGRESS REPORT,
INFORM COMMITTEE OF RESULTS OF CONTACTS WITH FOUNDAT-
IONS, AND MAKE PROPOSALS REGARDING SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR
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AD HOC MEETINGS OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.
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